

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /096 W

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P R 010946Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8315

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 5020

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEAN, MY

SUBJECT: ASEAN: STRUCTURAL ISSUES

1. THREE DAYS OF PREPARATORY TALKS BY ASEAN SENIOR OFFICIALS CONCLUDED JULY 31 WITH REPORTED AGREEMENT TO STREAMLINE ASEAN MACHINERY BY REDUCING NUMBER OF PERMANENT COMMITTEES FROM ELEVEN TO NINE. THE NINE, AS NOW CONSTITUTED ARE: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT; INFORMATION; BUDGET; SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY; TRADE AND TOURISM; INDUSTRY, MINERALS AND ENERGY; AND FINANCE AND BANKING. EARLIER THE OFFICIALS MET TO FINALIZE SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS

SUCH AS THE DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE SUMMIT, A DRAFT REPORT FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING COMMENCING TODAY (AUG. 1), AND TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED AT POST SUMMIT MEETINGS WITH AUSTRALIAN, JAPANESE AND NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTERS. THE OFFICIALS ALSO AGREED ON THE ROLE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO REVIEW AND COORDINATE ALL ASEAN MATTERS, BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPARENTLY WERE UNABLE TO RESOLVE TWO ISSUES (UNSPECIFIED).

2. QUESTIONED ON STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE ASEAN ADMINISTRATIVE SETUP PROPOSED BY INDONESIA AND PORTRAYED BY SOME AS AN EFFORT TO ASSURE INDONESIAN DOMINANCE OF ASEAN, FOREIGN MINISTERS MALIK, ROMULO AND RAJARATNAM LOW-KEYED THEIR RESPONSES IN REPLYING TO REPORTERS ON THEIR ARRIVAL IN KUALA LUMPUR JULY 31. MALIK SAID

HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ONLY PRESSING FOR CHANGES IN CONFORMITY WITH DECISIONS AT LAST YEAR'S SUMMIT TO MAKE ASEAN ADMINISTRATIVELY EFFECTIVE; ROMULO SAID THAT THE ASEAN STRUCTURE SHOULD BE REVIEWED PERIODICALLY TO IMPROVE ITS EFFECTIVENESS BUT THE GOP WOULD STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY CHANGE THAT WOULD UNDERMINE ASEAN SOLIDARITY. RAJARATNAM SAID THIS WAS NOT A BASIC PROBLEM, AS THE ORGANIZATION ALREADY HAS A SECRETARIAT.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH DETAILS HAVE NOT YET LEAKED OUT ON SENIOR OFFICIALS PROCEEDINGS, WE SUSPECT SUBJECT OF POSSIBLE RESTRUCTURING OF ASEAN SECRETARIAT WAS ONE OF THOSE LEFT PENDING. IN THIS REGARD, BILLING THE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PERMANENT COMMITTEES AS "STREAMLINING" MAY SERVE TO COVER AN AREA OF BASIC DISAGREEMENT AMONG THE ASEAN PARTNERS.
MILLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, AGREEMENTS, MEETING AGENDA, PLANNING MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KUALA05020
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770275-0966
Format: TEL
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197708111/aaaadqnn.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a865b350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1436171
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASEAN: STRUCTURAL ISSUES
TAGS: PORG, ECON, MY, ASEAN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a865b350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009